

# **The Kentucky Department of Agriculture**

## **KDA's Relationship to Kentucky Farmers' Markets**

Though the Kentucky Department for Public Health and Local Health Departments retain regulatory oversight of food safety at Kentucky's farmers' markets, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture does not regulate farmers' markets. Due to this, the term "farmers' market" is not consistently used across the state and may refer to everything from community, producer-only, open air markets to produce markets that buy all their product. As a consequence, each market is different. Some markets are sponsored by other entities and some are completely self-governing. Some work closely with their local Extension office and some are run by separate non-profit agencies that view the market as an asset to their overall mission.

The KDA Office of Agriculture Marketing and Product Promotion recognizes farmers' markets as a viable retail outlet for agricultural products and seeks to promote and strengthen markets to help Kentucky producers. KDA requires farmers' markets to register each year to receive assistance and to take advantage of technical assistance and grant opportunities. With up-to-date contact information, KDA can reach your market with the latest information. The registration is free. An added incentive to register your market is that it then becomes an approved location for vendors to market their home-based processed/microprocessed value-added food items.

## **Shared Expectation of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) and the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) regarding the operation of farmers' markets:**

**Market Managers and Boards** - Farmers' market boards should make reasonable efforts to ensure that all vendors selling products are in compliance with state/local health department food safety requirements. This includes ensuring that, where applicable, all vendors have the required permits and/or certifications/registrations and that these documents are prominently displayed by each vendor. Additionally, each market manager — or other responsible person designated by the organization operating the market — should maintain a copy (or a record of the number) of vendor permits and/or certifications/registrations. Market managers and other responsible persons are not expected to be food safety experts, but they are expected to help educate vendors about topics related to food safety and to ensure that all vendors comply with all pertinent food safety rules and regulations. Where market managers are unable to resolve issues, they are expected to notify the appropriate state/local health department food safety authorities and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture of noncompliant vendors.

Kentucky's Food Safety Branch can be contacted at (502) 564-7181. An address and telephone listing of all district and single-county health departments in the state can be found at the following web address:

[http://www.chs.state.ky.us/publichealth/lhd\\_address\\_listing.htm](http://www.chs.state.ky.us/publichealth/lhd_address_listing.htm) .

**Farmers' Markets Vendors**—Vendors at Farmers Markets are expected to comply with all applicable state and local health department food safety requirements. This will generally require that food vendors contact the local health department in each county where food products are offered to secure all pertinent registrations/certifications, permits, and, where required, inspections. Vendors are also expected to implement pertinent safe food handling procedures to ensure that farmers' market customers are provided with a safe, wholesome and unadulterated product which can ultimately be enjoyed by consumers across the state.

Each vendor is the responsible entity for correcting—in a timely manner—any food safety deficiencies noted by food safety inspectors. In short, vendors should consult their local health department food safety specialist to make sure the products they plan to market and sell are “approved.” An address and telephone listing of all district and single-county health departments in the state can be found at the following web address: [http://www.chs.state.ky.us/publichealth/lhd\\_address\\_listing.htm](http://www.chs.state.ky.us/publichealth/lhd_address_listing.htm) .

The Food Safety Branch has worked closely with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture to ensure that accurate information pertaining to the marketing of food products is available to all interested farmers' markets. If you would like for a representative of the Kentucky Food Safety Branch to give a short presentation at your next market meeting, feel free to contact the agency at (502) 564-7181.

### **KDA Market registration requirements**

On an annual basis KDA provides the USDA with data on Kentucky farmers' markets. In order to provide accurate information and to properly represent the industry, KDA registers markets each year.

For the purposes of KDA, *farmers' markets are defined as a prescribed location(s) where two or more producers gather on set days and times to sell products that they grow or produce directly to consumers. Though the market may allow other types of sales, the sale of agriculture products grown or produced by the seller or their family should be the primary business of the market.*

In March a registration form is sent to the last contact person listed in each of the registered markets for the previous year. Markets that have elected new officers or that have different contact people from the previous year need to notify KDA of these changes so the market will not miss out on any information or opportunities.

A market can register with KDA at any time during the year but, to be included in all listings and take full advantage of all opportunities, the market should register each year by May 15. Registration forms are available from Janet Eaton (502) 564-4983 or [janet.eaton@ky.gov](mailto:janet.eaton@ky.gov) or by going to the KDA Web site at [www.kyagr.com](http://www.kyagr.com) and clicking on “Farmers Markets” on the drop down menu. A market registration form for 2006 is provided in the appendix of this manual.

On the registration form questions are asked about the market that will help the KDA better promote markets across the state and obtain grant funds from programs that directly benefit markets. One of the most important pieces of data collected each year is the gross sales of the market. Though only about 50 percent of the markets collect this data, it is one of the most vital pieces of information in describing the industry and in establishing farmers' markets as an economic entity in the state. Without the sales figures from across the state the entities working on behalf of farmers' markets are unable to broker for more financial support for the markets.

The number of vendors a market registers and the products the market offer also helps to create a picture of your market. These help KDA properly represent the industry to other entities and to plan for future needs. This information is always available to you and your market if it is needed for grants applications or planning purposes.

Each market is required to submit a current copy of its operating rules with its registration. This serves to keep KDA current on concerns and issues in markets. An added benefit is to share with new or emerging markets what rules have worked for successful markets.

### **Market Development and Educational Programs**

KDA offers technical assistance to markets on topics other than production. KDA staff help community partnerships to start markets from scratch and help improve existing markets.

#### **Regional Meetings**

In 2006 KDA will partner with other entities to offer regional meetings for farmers' markets and their sponsors. A section for market managers will offer technical assistance on such topics as promotional planning, conflict resolution, farm inspections and more. We also anticipate having a representative from the Kentucky Food Safety Branch on hand to discuss rules/regulations regarding food sales at farmers' markets. Producers will be offered marketing and merchandising workshops as well as information on production tips directly relating to market growing. The required meeting for Farmers' Market Nutrition Program market coordinators will be held at that time. Grant writing workshops will also be held. The regional meetings are anticipated to be held in March 2006. For further information contact Janet Eaton or Mac Stone at (502) 564-4983.

#### **Future Farmers of America Contest**

KDA sponsors the farmers' market entrepreneur contest for youth. FFA youth compete on both the regional and state level in the area of direct marketing and merchandising savvy. Support of this program complements KDA's goal of improving marketing skills of Kentucky producers.

#### **Other Opportunities**

KDA assists the Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show each year in January to develop a track of workshops on topics specific to farmers' markets. This

conference provides an opportunity for growers to come together and learn about the latest production research and attend workshops on marketing and merchandising.

KDA assists with the Ohio Valley Direct Marketing Conference each year. The conference results from a partnership between Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky agencies. The location of the conference is rotated between the states each year. In 2006 the conference will be held in Madison, Indiana at Clifty Falls State Park on February 21 and 22. The 2007 conference will be in Kentucky. For further information on this conference contact J.K. Henshaw at (502) 495-5106.

### **Kentucky Proud Logo Program**

In 2004 Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer unveiled a new logo to identify Kentucky-produced products. The “Kentucky Proud” logo is available to all Kentucky producers of agriculture products for use on their products. Becoming a program participant is free and an application for 2006 can be found in the appendix of this publication. Markets that register are automatically enrolled in the program for the year. Individual producers, however, have to sign up separately.

Throughout the year KDA will promote recognition of the logo through both targeted and general media campaigns. Consumers will be encouraged to look for and ask for “Kentucky Proud” products. By placing the logo on your product you may take advantage of this advertising and promotion.

### **Kentucky Proud At-Cost Promotional Items Program**

KDA bulk buys several Kentucky Proud promotional items already printed with the logo that producers may use to promote their product or to add the logo to their product label. Product stickers in three sizes, price cards, plant stakes, plastic shopping bags, and canvas totes, ball caps, and more are available now with more products being planned. “Kentucky Proud” logo participants will be kept up-to-date on products and prices as they become available. If you have a good idea for a promotional item, don’t hesitate to let KDA know.